

3. A check including the amount of \$740.00 is enclosed to cover the Filing Fee.

4. Cancel claims 2-20 before calculating the Filing Fee. A Preliminary Amendment is submitted herewith.

5. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or to credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-1417. A duplicate copy of this Request is enclosed for this purpose.

6. Amend the specification by inserting, before the first line:

--This is a continuation application of U.S. Serial No. 09/227,740, filed January 8, 1999.--

7. New drawings are enclosed, thirteen (13) sheets, Figs. 1-17.

8. The power of attorney is set forth in the Declaration in the prior application or an associate power of attorney is hereby granted to:

Jeffrey M. Ketchum, Registration No. 31,174
Shrinath Malur, Registration No. 34,663
John R. Mattingly, Registration No. 30,293
Daniel J. Stanger, Registration No. 32,846
Gene W. Stockman, Registration No. 21,021.

There is a change in the correspondence address.

Address all future correspondence to:

MATTINGLY, STANGER & MALUR, P.C.
1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 370
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 684-1120



24956

PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Please associate this application with Customer No. 24956.

9. The prior application is assigned to Hitachi, Limited.

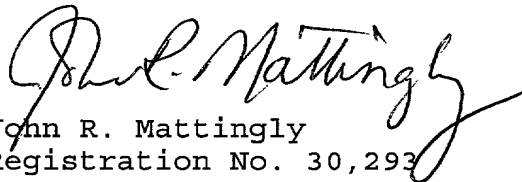
10. Priority of the following Japanese patent application is claimed under 35 U.S.C. § 119:

No. 10-2796, filed January 9, 1998; and
No. 10-369019 filed December 25, 1998.

The certified priority documents have been filed in the parent application.

The undersigned hereby declares that no matter contained in the specification, including the claims, and drawings filed in the present continuation application would have been new matter in the prior application Serial No. 09/227,740, as originally filed on January 8, 1999.

Respectfully submitted,



John R. Mattingly
Registration No. 30,293
Attorney of Record

MATTINGLY, STANGER & MALUR
1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 370
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 684-1120
Date: February 5, 2002